

consideration of the Christen nomination.

Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island asks that all time be yielded back. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Morgan Christen, of Alaska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) is necessarily absent.

I further announce that if present and voting, the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) would vote "yea."

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 231 Ex.]

#### YEAS—95

Akaka	Franken	Merkley
Alexander	Gillibrand	Mikulski
Ayotte	Graham	Murkowski
Barrasso	Grassley	Murray
Baucus	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Begich	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Bennet	Hatch	Portman
Bingaman	Heller	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Reed
Blunt	Hutchison	Reid
Boozman	Inhofe	Risch
Boxer	Inouye	Roberts
Brown (MA)	Isakson	Rockefeller
Brown (OH)	Johanns	Rubio
Burr	Johnson (WI)	Sanders
Cantwell	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Cardin	Kirk	Sessions
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Kohl	Shelby
Chambliss	Kyl	Snowe
Coats	Landrieu	Stabenow
Coburn	Lautenberg	Tester
Cochran	Leahy	Thune
Collins	Lee	Toomey
Conrad	Levin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Lieberman	Udall (NM)
Corker	Lugar	Warner
Cornyn	Manchin	Webb
Crapo	McCaill	Whitehouse
Durbin	McCaskey	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	Wyden
Feinstein	Menendez	

#### NAYS—3

DeMint	Vitter
Paul	

#### NOT VOTING—2

Kerry	Moran
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table. The President will be

immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the vote on the nomination of Morgan Christen, of Alaska, to be U.S. circuit judge for the Ninth Circuit. If I were able to attend today's session, I would have supported the Christen nomination.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 7 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I come to the floor to first say "thank you" to my colleagues for supporting an incredible judge, but I also come to the floor today to mark an anniversary. December 18, 2011, marks the 40th anniversary of a truly historic date for the first people of Alaska—passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. To mark this historic occasion, Senator MURKOWSKI and I have submitted a Senate resolution to formally celebrate the success and contributions of Alaska Native people and their corporations. We will be asking for the unanimous consent of our colleagues to adopt this resolution at a certain point.

Over the past 40 years, Alaska has witnessed astonishing economic growth resulting from ANCSA. This has benefited not just Native people but all Alaskans. This historic piece of legislation allowed a new group of people who for centuries were economically disadvantaged to enter into the business world and to become economic leaders. Under ANCSA, they have contributed to the State and national economies in unprecedented ways. ANCSA has two primary goals: to resolve longstanding issues surrounding aboriginal land claims in Alaska and to stimulate economic development.

Many Alaskans led the charge on creation and passage of the claims act. My father, the late Representative Nick Begich, was one of them. There were many new Native leaders involved—Willie Hensley, John Borbridge, and other young advocates who very quickly engaged in this historic Native rights legislation.

Today, I would also like to recognize all the wives, daughters, sisters, secretaries, and other powerful women who

contributed to the passage of ANCSA. Many of them may not have received formal recognition of their contributions, women such as Marlene Johnson, who played an instrumental role in the creation and passage of ANCSA. She spent countless hours flying to and from southeast Alaska and Washington, DC, leaving behind her full-time job and five children, doing her part to see ANCSA move through Congress. To engage in negotiations, Alaskans would fly for days to get from Barrow or Fairbanks or Kotzebue to Washington, DC. Many of them camped out on couches and floors in Washington for months to get it done.

Today, Alaska Native corporations are tremendous economic drivers not only for Alaska but for the entire United States and even internationally. In 2010, 8 of the 10 most profitable businesses in Alaska were Alaska Native corporations. Of the five that topped \$1 billion, all were Native corporations.

Cash dividends paid to corporation shareholders continue to be a very important source of income for many Alaska Native individuals and families. In total, dividends paid by Alaska Native corporations to their shareholders rose by 39 percent from 2009 to 2010, up to \$171 million.

These dividends serve Native families in many ways. In some cases, they help provide basics, such as food and heating fuel or supplies and equipment to continue their subsistence way of life. For other families, shareholder dividends go into college savings accounts or new startup businesses. Sometimes they simply help offset the costs of caring for their aging loved ones.

For the business owners everywhere, Native and non-Native alike, shareholder dividends provide a major economic boost. Today, Alaska Native corporations and their subsidiaries are providing thousands of jobs across the United States. These corporations provide job training and scholarships and other support to create new opportunities for young shareholders and their descendants. The corporations also offer meaningful internships to help young Alaska Natives build long-standing professional careers within the corporate structure. Elders, the most respected people in the Native communities, receive special assistance and financial support from their corporations.

Clearly, 40 years later, many Alaska Native corporations have matured to become business leaders. Unfortunately, many others and the Alaska Natives they represent have not all had great success—yet.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was one approach, an experiment to meet America's treaty obligations to the first people of this country. I will continue to support the Alaska Native tribes while also strengthening the capacity of the Alaska Native corporations.